

Franklin Mint catalog: numismatic winner

By Roger Boye

MOST COIN collectors probably are aware that the Franklin Mint has produced a lot of medals in its 12-year history, but it takes a book like "Guidebook of Franklin Mint Issues" to vividly portray just how many.

The listing of the more than 14,000 different specimens (both medals and other collectibles) produced by the nation's largest private mint takes up 240 pages in the guidebook's 1977 edition, which was published last month. The book's editor, Chester Krause, is the numismatic pub-

lisher and editor who founded the hobby's first coin newspaper in 1952, Numismatic News (now Numismatic News Weekly).

Collectors who have purchased a lot of the medals might be disappointed by the "current market value," which is listed in the guidebook for most of the medals. In many cases, the value is roughly equivalent to the issue price, and some medals are even selling for less than the issue price. (This won't come as a surprise to almost anyone who has tried selling medals made by private mints.)

One of the more extreme examples is a series

called "Michelangelo's Genius." The sterling silver, prooflike set of 60 medals cost \$1,500 to buy from the Franklin Mint. Current market value is from \$450 to \$900, according to the guidebook.

In spite of the rather low prices (you can't blame Krause for reporting fact; if anything, some collectors might say the values he lists for some medals are too high), the guidebook is a valuable resource for anyone with a relatively large collection of Franklin Mint issues.

The book is available in some coin stores, or may be purchased for \$6.50 from the publisher, Krause Publications, Iola, Wis. 54945.